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THE ARCHER'S CHANCE SHOT

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THE ARCHER'S CHANCE SHOT.





"THE ALLEGORICAL MEANING OF THE PICTURE WAS OBVIOUS."—Page 82.

THE ARCHER'S CHANCE SHOT.

BY

SARSON C. J. INGHAM,

AUTHOR OF

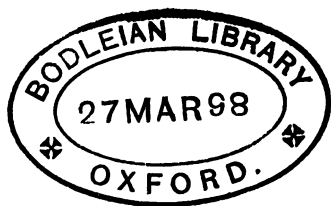
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THE ARCHER'S CHANCE SHOT.

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDS IN SPITE OF ROME.



IN one of the most monastic and Catholic of Belgian towns, the good Protestant pastor, Monsieur Louis Jean Van Hout, pursued the even tenor of a useful but uneventful life.

The faithful few that composed his flock were, alas! more few than faithful. He had much ado to keep them together. Some of them were English gentlewomen of decayed fortunes who preferred to live abroad because they were under no

obligation to keep up appearances, and these were, strange to say, the most recreant to their religious principles. The attractions of a fête day were often stronger than any inducement to spiritual worship.

Nor had the pastor much more satisfaction with his own people. Some, who had shaken off the shackles of superstition, or whose independent minds had revolted against priestly tyranny, had not attained to the simplicity of faith in Christ, nor did they seem particularly desirous of it. The spiritual man had not yet taken the place of the natural one that "discerneth not the things which be of God." The attendance both upon the Dutch and the French service was pitifully small, and when the "cup of blessing" was to be passed round, the promise made to the two or three might be claimed in all its literalness.

English ministers, used to the sight of large and appreciative audiences, sustained in their arduous toils by the prayers and sympathy of their people, can hardly realise the position of the pastor in France or Germany who is expected to succour and uphold everybody, but who is left to himself in his own troubles, to all appearances in the faith of super-

natural help and profiting. If, in his depression, he temporarily betakes himself to a brook Cherith, the ravens that feed him there are as likely to be from Ahab's kitchen as from any other.

So our Monsieur Van Hout communed with his God, but knew little of the communion of saints. He sowed the seed diligently and watered it with tears, but he had hardly a foretaste of that joy of the reaper which was no doubt in reserve for him.

What would have become of him without his strong faith in God? He was faithful over a few things, whether he hoped to be made ruler over many things or not.

Monsieur Van Hout, friendly and sociable, must have inevitably become morbid and melancholy, if he could not have had intercourse with another class of minds than those he met with directly in the line of his duty. He was widely read and highly cultured. In his young days he had devoted much of his time to art, and not without success. Now, in the few moments of leisure he had from more serious pursuits, the artist in him would occasionally wake up, and the result would be a picture laboured at between long intervals. The Roman Catholic clergy

naturally stood aloof from him, and he from them ; yet even with some of these he had had at times friendly relations. Certain charities had brought pastor and curé together on ground that was not, after all, felt to be so very unequal. The feelings of the man had unconsciously triumphed over those of the bigot ; or, shall we say, the hidden Christ-man in each heart had been discerning of the other and had shaken hands. Monsieur's memory was tenacious of instances like these, leading to hours of pleasant and familiar talk on such ground as was not debatable. The platform they stood upon might be narrow, but to occupy it for ever so short a time was sweetly refreshing to the spirit of the much slighted but much enduring pastor. Apart from his religion, he was also held in some esteem by men whose opinions were pronounced, but whose learning and superior tastes led them rather to affect the society of a refined and accomplished gentleman when they met with him. Monsieur did not repel their desire to cultivate. Why should he ? To do so was to throw away all opportunity of influencing them for good. He knew they would not seek him at his church. Let him, then, at his fireside make them welcome.

His complaisance did not lead him to lay aside any of his ordinary habits for them. They were welcome either to his coffee or his *vin ordinaire*, but, if the hour arrived for family prayer, the French Testaments were passed round. There was no apology for suspending the conversation while the sacrifice of prayer and praise was celebrated, nor was it abridged or hurried over in a perfunctory manner.

And from this occasional intercourse grew friendships which had been perfect had they been held in Him in whom our union is complete.

Monsieur's dearest friend out of his own community was a Roman Catholic, a Roman Catholic, too, of the very "straitest sect." They had been friends from boys. Their friendship had sprung up at the School of Art in Antwerp. Louis Jean Van Hout, however, was called on to cede his young ambition to a higher claim, while Adolphe Woeste was left to his studies; and, as his parents were people of good means, every opportunity was subsequently afforded him of perfecting his art education by travel and the instruction of great masters.

Adolphe Woeste, like Louis Jean Van Hout, was a young man of a religious mind. If we allow for an

inborn inclination to noble sentiments and aspirations, which may either be mistaken for religion, or impel the mind to seek it, he had it undoubtedly.

He had a natural abhorrence to what was profane and immoral, hence he was "a young man of clean lips," and the harmonious character and intelligence of his schoolfellow in art could not but be congenial to him. Looking from the points of correspondence in the character of the two boys, it is no wonder they were friends. Looking at the youthful conviction each had of the other's ineligibility for the Celestial Gate, while he was only living up to false lights; also the tyranny Rome exercises over the social intercourse and affections of her children, it was a wonder that their friendship could outlive a week. As it was, it was very much restricted, and for some years after the Antwerp intercourse appeared to have been abandoned.

When circumstances threw them together again the old warm feelings revived; but the years they had been separated had not confirmed the soul-likeness between them; it had rather strengthened the traits in which they were contrasted. Van Hout's natural buoyancy had not been reproved and restricted in

his daily communion with the "living springs." It had been sanctified and rendered tributary to that joy in the Lord which was his strength. Woeste, on the contrary, was, under the Romish discipline, made the thrall of his own yearnings after purity and truth. He was no less a devotee of his art for the wholeness of his religious character, but he grew almost indifferent to the beauties of nature in his struggles after high religious representation. Such a man could neither be the disciple of Pierre Paul Rubens, of Van Oordt, or of Rembrandt. The masters from whose fires of genius he tremblingly sought to seize a spark wherewith to enkindle his own were Raphael, Murillo, and the divine Angelo. For years he wandered in Italy, and among the cathedrals and churches of Spain, embellishing the chambers of his imagery and his canvas at the same time with the most glorious suggestions of things seen through "a glass darkly," that the brain of man perhaps has e'er conceived.

So doing, he proved that

"Our divinest pleasure
With some pain is fraught."

The pain the reader guesses at is, perhaps, that

pain of unsatisfied desire, of inability to execute what the brain conceives that is special to the child of genius. But Woeste knew a deeper pain than this, a pain for which there is but one balm ; and this he was evermore silently seeking, yet evermore in the wrong place. When his eye rested on the incommunicable glow of "burning seraph," on meek Madonna and on patient martyr, the praise, the purity, the patience, became the one thing which he saw. They took possession of him, and he yearned after them as being spiritual pearls of great price. He looked within, and he saw the wrangling, selfish, discontented inner man, as opposed to the outward saint. Then before his confessor Woeste dragged this criminal, praying to have him brought into subjection. The result was much mortification, much penance heroically endured, rigid outward conformity to his Church's ceremonial, but no peace, no assurance that was not founded on works of supererogation, and bitter, voluntary self-abasement and correction.

While in Spain Monsieur Woeste married a young and beautiful girl, who lightened with the playfulness of her exuberant nature the austerity of his pensive, deeply thoughtful one ; and during the short

time their union lasted, she did much to rescue him from asceticism. But the damp air of the Pays Bas was baneful to her, and a sudden, sharp attack of bronchitis carried her off at an early age from her husband and a sweet little girl of four.

After this bereavement Woeste became more meditative and absorbed in the duties of his religion than ever. His little girl was sent to a convent to be taken care of and educated. She returned to him for long vacations, and in her fourteenth year he recalled her altogether, that he might have her near him, and that she might complete her education under his eye. The "sisters" who had had the training of her said she was a little saint, and this religiousness endeared her to her father more than her opening beauty. The two natures soon grew into one, and little Rosa, hitherto satisfied with externals, endeavoured earnestly to be pure and beautiful within. Hers was the one presence that was never forbidden in Monsieur Woeste's studio. She sewed, she embroidered altar-cloths or priests' vestments, she sang or read to him. From her babyhood she had been brought into many of his pictures, and now it appeared he had brought her into his life and had made her a part of it.

As his friends were hers also, she became acquainted with Monsieur Van Hout's daughters, who were by some few years her seniors ; but the older she grew the more carefully did she guard this kind of intercourse, while she still wished—oh, how devoutly!—that Emilie Van Hout had been of the true Church ; because then she might have surrendered to the respect and affection she really felt for her, and might have been more at one with her than she was with any of her young associates who were of Rome.





CHAPTER II.

AN OPPORTUNE VISIT.



ONSIEUR VAN HOUT was on a low key. He had no other cause for depression than that we have explained in describing his life and character ; but that was telling on him most painfully, and he was ready to dispute his own part and lot in the apostles' commission, so few seals were there to his ministry.

"I cannot understand it," he said bitterly. He had been reading, too, of some eminent Christians, who had been brought to the feet of the Saviour, as Simon Peter was brought, by the sweet officiousness of brotherly love. Yet who of all his friends had he

succeeded in so leading? Had he not prayed for them, had he not been in earnest, had he not tried again and again?

"It must be that I am not influential," he reasoned in regard to his utter want of success.

"Some will not hear; but there is Woeste. How I have thought before meeting with him what I should say if we should get on the subject! How carefully I have arranged the most convincing proofs that the original simplicity of Christ's teaching is with us; that from them Rome has gradually swerved. How courteously he has listened to me, and yet he is found to-day having, it may be, all things but the one thing needful.

"Much of the good that is in him may be of grace; his soul may be as safe as mine; but why may I not do the work of Ananias upon his spiritual vision, and see him receive his sight?"

So musing, Monsieur the Pastor resolved that, while he continued to pray for him, he would never more be drawn into argument with him; for, indeed, it was of no use. They went round and round in a circle, and always came back to the same point.

"Think of the sun," says the proverb. At that

moment Monsieur heard a knock at the street door, and then his daughter Jeannette's lively voice in the hall.

"Why, it's Monsieur Woeste and Rosa. I am so glad. Papa is not in good spirits; to see you will do him good."

"Your papa not in good spirits, mademoiselle! Be thankful the malady is not chronic. He will be himself again soon, never fear."

"You will help me," said the pastor suavely, as he went forward to greet his visitors.

"Now, is it not fortunate you should come when I am in need of such a cordial as your presence can always give?"

"My dear fellow, you flatter me. I never knew before that I was to be looked to for a cordial. Quite the reverse. Such things are more in your line. Rosa and I had some commissions to execute here. We have executed them, and now are at your disposal till it is time to leave for the half-past nine train."

"Good!" said Monsieur. "Let us make the most of the time that we shall be together."

The two gentlemen repaired to the vinery and lighted their cigars. Presently they were joined by the three young ladies, who had no idea of being

denied the privilege of listening to their papas while they talked. They all brought their needlework, and now and then they chatted in an undertone to each other.

After tea it was the same scene transferred to the *salon*; but Emilie forgot her work, and sitting up to the table listened, her chin supported by her hand, to the conversation, which grew, on Monsieur Van Hout's side, still more racy and animated, while now and then from Monsieur Woeste's lips fell thoughts which Emilie thought might well have supplied words for one of Mendelssohn's songs without them. The light of the lamp fell on her calm, good face as she listened. She was not aware that the artist directed many a furtive glance to her when she was near him. Now was a favourable opportunity for observing her, and he did not fail to profit by it.

Emilie's, though not a face that would strike a stranger at first sight, had grown upon him. He thought it beautiful as an index to great moral purity.

Furtively he studied the faultless outlines, for he had a purpose for them forming in his mind. Rosa

Woeste was a no less interested auditor. Her dark, glowing eye kindled with enthusiasm as with alternate pathos and the sparkle of French irony, Monsieur Van Hout pleaded for what was homely and spiritual in art, and all the poetry and spirituality of her father's severer nature—were called out to defend its entire consecration to the divinely beautiful and the sublime. Monsieur the Pastor was in favour of landscape and of genre, the first as bringing before the mind's eye the works of the Creator, the latter as tending to shed a soft, idealizing light on the familiar scenes of home and outdoor life, which, because of daily contact, are apt to be noted through too harsh a medium, or with a too unloving eye.

Monsieur the Artist argued that genius was a divine gift and should be applied to divine uses. Its business was with the divine in men's souls; not with the material and the human.

"And the love of country, children, and wife—have these nothing of divine in them, because they are human?" returned the other.

"Is not our bright, rosy *gamin* as speaking a subject for the canvas as an imaginary little John Baptist?"

"Are we never to see motherhood represented but

through the eyes of a Madonna? Does it require the serious representation of a martyr to show us that patience is beautiful? I was so charmed once with seeing the steadiness and pluck with which a pretty *paysanne* persevered in the milking of a refractory cow, that I took a sketch of the scene on the spot, and I said to my children when I showed it them :

“‘Courage to take the bull by the horns, and patience to milk the cow, though she tosses and kicks.’ They have made a comic application of the lesson many a time since, and always a salutary one.”

“Very well for the gravity of a Genevan pastor,” said Woeste ; and they continued their pleasant controversy, Monsieur Woeste enriching his part in it by recollections of altar-pieces and of shrines in the cathedrals of Spain, and the wonderful emotions they had inspired in the contemplation.

These descriptions were as delightful to Monsieur Van Hout as to the girls. He could sympathize with his friend’s admiration of them, while he stopped short of his idolatry. At last, as the time neared for parting, Monsieur Woeste exclaimed :

‘Oh! how I pity a man of your tastes belonging to a church so bald and so bare that it affords them no gratification!’

In a moment the look of sadness which had disappeared from the pastor’s countenance swept over it again, and he said, in a wearied, dispirited tone of voice: “It is quite true that the religion which I tell you is the religion of the New Testament has nothing of exterior. Its aim is to subdue what is wrong in man, and to change his heart. No religion is worth anything that stops short of that.”

Monsieur Woeste might have replied, but that from the change in his friend’s manner he saw that he was troubled, and that he did not care to continue the subject.

Jeannette, who had left the room, returned, and in her wake was a comely little Belgian housemaid, carrying a kind, good-tempered face under her mob cap, and a tray laden with salad, tartines, and fruit in her bare, round arms.

After this simple repast, the whole party set off to the station, the long walk through the quiet evening streets putting a healthy finish to a day of intellectual pleasure and excitement.

As the girls returned with their papa, he said :

"Well, has it not been pleasant, my children ? What delightful little breaks occur in the monotony of life when one is least expecting them !"

"We were so glad on your account, papa."

"And on your own ?"

"We have enjoyed hearing you talk. And it was so nice to-night that there was no religious discussion. On the points that you really did discuss, we felt as if you and Monsieur Woeste were pulling us two ways at once."

"Ah ! that is a double compliment. Are you still in equilibrium ?"

"No : when the spell of Monsieur Woeste's eloquence is over, one returns to long-established convictions."

"Then your young friend, Rosa. It has been a satisfaction to you to see her again."

"Yes ; but there is something very unsatisfactory in Rosa. She does not give herself up to the enjoyment of the hour, but seems to be ever on her guard, lest the pleasure of it should be a snare to her. She is unwilling to enjoy us to the same extent that we are her ; consequently we cannot help reflecting her shyness."

"Perhaps she has not your freedom."

"No; she has received her instructions. Possibly all her intimacy with us has to be submitted to her confessor, or it may be that she has not sufficient liberality of sentiment to shake hands cordially with those who have the disposition to be friendly, but are not within the pale of her Church."

"I doubt not that there is a little of both in it," said the pastor.

"Still, Monsieur Woeste, papa, is not like that; and yet he is a rigid Catholic, obedient, no doubt, to his spiritual director, and intensely fond of his own Church. Why should Rosa be so much less conciliatory than her father?"

"Because, being younger, she is more mistrustful of herself. Furthermore, women submit more readily and more entirely to spiritual tyranny than men do."

"But where would you find any Romanist more devoted than Monsieur Woeste is, papa?"

"True; yet even in his relations with his confessor I can conceive a 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'

"He will fearlessly lay bare to him any wound that requires probing; he will fulfil to the letter all

obligatory penance, however harsh ; but he will not be warned where he sees no danger ; he will not have his friends, his books, his recreations all chosen for him."

"And Rosa will?"

"Rosa will, undoubtedly. Her father has moulded her spiritual nature; and yet, while one perceives that, one perceives a difference between them. His mind is loftier than hers; but hers is the more healthy of the two. His sanctity lies in introspection, contemplation, and voluntary humility; hers in good works which furnish a thousand little activities that take her out of herself.

"Both are bigots; she is the most intolerant. Yet, ah! they are both beautiful. And one grudges them sadly to Rome."

"I was so glad that to-night you did not get into an argument on the subject, papa. Really it does no good."

"No; I have made up my mind not to argue with my friend Woeste any more."





CHAPTER III.

A NAIL IN A SURE PLACE.



LITTLE did the good pastor know the train of reflections that had been suggested to his friend's mind by those few words sadly, yet indifferently, spoken.

"It is quite true that the religion which I tell you is the religion of the New Testament has nothing of exterior. Its aim is to subdue what is wrong in man, and to change his heart. No religion is worth anything that stops short of that."

"Is that so?" queried Monsieur Woeste. "It is a great deal to profess; for really sin in man seems like a hydra-headed monster, and if one aims a successful blow at one head, another springs up and the first

grows again. Besides this conversion, I think they call it, what appliances have they to effect it in comparison with us? And with us, when we have tested all, is there not still something of impure, something of rebellious, that eludes and baffles, and will not give up the ghost?"

Now, as we have said, the sense of this was the misery of Monsieur Woeste's life. It was the sure place into which the nail of the pastor's words had lodged, never to be withdrawn. He could not help pondering over this arrogant pretension of a humble, unattractive Church. His desire to know the basis on which it rested grew more feverish. One might have supposed that the knowledge had been communicated in his many arguments with his pious friend; but the "mystery of godliness" is not often arrived at in the heat of theological warfare. This much Monsieur Woeste knew, that they claimed for their great authority the New Testament, and that they insisted strongly on faith in Christ.

This faith, he thought that he possessed. The Protestant might take a shorter cut to the Crucified than the Catholic; but the Catholic showed a deeper reverence in approaching Him through human and

spiritual mediators; so why should the purity of his faith be doubted?

The explanation was not far to seek. He had in his possession a little Testament in a black velvet case, which his fellow student had given him when they both went on their separate ways.

He had looked into it with caution; he had approached its holy teachings in a spirit of resistance; so that, like the Jew who reads the prophets through a veil, he discerned not Him who "Himself bore our sins and carried our sorrows."

But he was older now and had arrived at more of the independence at which the pastor hinted to his daughter. He would really see for himself what Van Hout meant. He would give the New Testament a careful reading.

Oh, to be rid of the plague of his own heart! If such a miracle could only be! What would he not give? What would he not do?

Why, he believed he could even leave his own Dan for the other's Beersheba.





CHAPTER IV.

“THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORD GIVETH LIGHT.”



THE result of an inquiry after Truth so whole-hearted and so earnest may well be anticipated.

“Oh! that I knew where I might find Him,” has been the cry of many a weary seeker after God; while with many a longing one the where has resolved itself into a when.

Yet both have this sure word of promise: “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”

The Psalmist says: “The entrance of Thy word giveth light: it giveth understanding to the simple.”

But here was no simple, child-like disciple, or fool of a wayfaring man. Here was one who had had mind and conscience warped from early boyhood;

who had been misled by a hundred sophistries and subtleties ; and who, though thoroughly befogged and bewildered, could scarcely bear to acknowledge to himself that possibly he had been led wrong.

Yet the light to which he had at last set his face should sweetly steal through all the mists, scattering them in its swift passage. Presently he should see “men as trees walking”; then, as his eyes grew accustomed to the new soft radiance, he should behold the Man and see Jesus ; not Mary, not intercessory saints, not tonsured and dark-robed priests.

In reading the Gospel narrative, Monsieur Woeste was, perhaps, not so much surprised at what he did see—for at first his perception was dim—as at what he did not see. The simplicity of it impressed him strangely. It seemed so sweet, so calm, so holy. Surely the simplicity of the worship he had condemned was of another kind ! He could be more than reconciled to this—he could welcome it.

He followed the wondrous narrative, his heart pulsing with new emotions at every step. Mary left the place where, in his imagination, she was throned as queen of heaven, and became the meek, child-like maid of Galilee, receiving the angel’s message with

becoming humility and lowliness of heart. To the wondrous Child the Magi knelt; they offered her no homage. In her subsequent appearance on the scene he saw her gently chidden for seeking, even in small matters, to interfere with a Life that was now under the direction of the Father with whom He was one; and in the closing scene of all she is cared for as a woman and as an afflicted mother, commended with a sweet significance to the disciple most beloved; but from the dying lips is addressed to her no word that links her with His own vicarious sufferings and priestly mediation between man and God—no dim prophecy that in His exaltation she shall share.

All this Monsieur Woeste saw and pondered. The subsequent appearances of our risen Lord to the disciples and to the women heightened the distrust of Mariolatry arising in his mind.

He saw the leper cleansed and heard of sins forgiven. He saw the Magdalene raised and comforted and sent away in peace; but there was not a word of penance, of works of righteousness, of special merit. The publican was justified, the Pharisee made a standing example of, the dying thief taken into paradise with Him, without any

dispensation from purgatorial fires or prolonged repentance.

He went on to the Epistles, and diligently read them through. The same simplicity, the same insistence on faith in Christ, on purity of life; yes, and not only the justification of the spirit, but its sanctification was promised. There was a rest remaining for the people of God, into which they might enter here; a "liberty wherewith Christ makes His children free"; but was it to be reached by the paths in which he had so long and so vainly walked? No; even the way into the holiest was by the blood of Jesus.

He recognised a likeness to his own Church in the prediction of that which should be in the latter days: "Forbidden to marry and to abstain from meats." To what phase of Christianity but the Latin could these marks whereby the false teachers might be known apply?

And the gorgeous celebration of the mass—how did that contrast with the simple inauguration of the Holy Feast?

Monsieur Woeste did not pour his questionings into any human ear. He did not go to the Fathers or even

to his confessor to learn the answer to his doubts. He did not seek Van Hout, that he might tell him that his confidence in his old guide was shaken.

He reasoned within himself and was troubled, and yet an "inward anointing" was going on which brought a strange promise of healing. He who joined the disciples on the road to Emmaus drew near to him, though unseen. To the sin-burdened conscience was addressed the gracious words of invitation :

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Then a great, wakening light broke upon him, and Woeste knew from Whom the inward anointing came and Who it was that spoke. He ceased from his own works.

"What would'st thou that I should do unto thee?"

"Lord, that the leper may be cleansed."

"I will : be thou clean."

What Rome could not do and what litanies could not do ; what masses, what fastings, what prayers and tears could not do, Jesus had done in a moment ; and

the "new creature" in him stepped out of the "body of his death," fair and free and happy. That was the whole story of it—a story often told since the cross was uplifted on Calvary for a sign.

Monsieur Van Hout was right. The religion of the New Testament taught little in respect to the form of worship. Its object is the heart of man, and it is able to regenerate and purify even that deceitful thing; to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Proportioned to Monsieur Woeste's long sorrow and self-aborrence was the joy with which he drew "water out of this well of salvation," reading the Old Testament as eagerly as he had read the New. But could he keep it to himself? No; he must confess it without flinching. Shall the Spirit say "Come," and not the Bride? In a tremor of mingled fear and hope, he remembered that his first duty was to his darling child.





CHAPTER V.

A PAINFUL DISCOVERY.

ROSA had already a suspicion of something passing in her father's mind with which she might not intermeddle. He had not been the same since that last evening at Monsieur the Pastor's. He had been less communicative with her. To his long reveries she was accustomed; to the sadness also and austerity that were evidences of his superior sanctity, and, we may confess, to the petulance of the *genus irritabile*, to which he undoubtedly belonged; but lately his face bore not so much the impress of religious contemplation, as of some great perplexity. When she broke upon his musings with some irrelevant remark, *there was* no annoyance in the tone with which he

answered her, but a mournful sweetness and a tenderness, that one might have supposed only extraordinary circumstances could have evoked. Withal he grew calmer, and the dawn of a new hope showed in the finely chiselled face, once so melancholy and despairing.

Rosa read the sign without comprehending it; and, as it is in our very nature to be made uneasy by that which we do not understand, an undefined fear and uneasiness laid hold upon her, haunting her during the whole period of the suspense.

Her first apprehension was lest her father, with no signs of breaking up or of disease, was about to be taken from her. She had heard of the fruit mellowing just before its fall, and of holy angels robing the soul for paradise that was soon to be summoned into it. Somehow the change in him and his yearning tenderness over her, with his uncommunicated musings, seemed to whisper something of the kind.

Rosa, however, was not a fanciful girl. She was a remarkably practical one, and she tried to combat her nervous dread by the philosophical suggestion that the artist was under some new and very happy possession; that he was thinking out his idea, and

that in time the results would be elaborated on the glowing canvas.

But one night she made a discovery that was to her as the beginning of sorrows. A telegram arrived for Monsieur Woeste after the whole household were supposed to be in bed.

The *portière* took it in, and Rosa, who had feally not retired, but was sitting up till morning over the recitation of some additional "Heures" which had been imposed upon her, left the room, and took the telegram in the hope that the slight diversion might dissipate her increasing sleepiness.

"I will take the telegram to papa," she said, taking it from the hands of the maid and going to his apartment. To her surprise she found that the door of a room which had been her mother's boudoir, and was always kept as it was during her life-time, was open.

The coal fire laid in readiness in the grate had been lighted, and a chair at the table and a book with a small velvet-case, dropped like a glove upon the floor, showed that her papa had been there and that he had been reading. It promised also that he would soon *return*. The room was a very elegant one, with two *cabinets in it*, and a small library composed chiefly of

the romantic literature of Spain, There was also a guitar and a bandolin, which had never responded to any touch save that which was now stilled in death. Rich flowers grew in green boxes, placed along the window sills, and some twining plants were so artistically disposed as to seem a very part of the curtain with which their shade combined,

Monsieur Woeste had taken a pride in making the cage a fairy bower for the bird, and now the bird was flown, he insisted on having it kept sacred to her memory.

Rosa was the only visitor who might do more than look in ; but she was careful never to leave any trace of her presence that might jar on his sense of the sanctity of the place. The anniversary of her father's and mother's wedding-day, her mother's birthday, and the day of her death were always spent there with her father ; and, if Rosa had been imaginative, she might have woven many a romance out of the story of their love and courtship, their pilgrimage together in the summer lands which her father described to her as she sat at his feet or over her embroidery frame.

She knew that he sometimes spent part of the night in the room, from the fact that the fire had been
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lighted and that it had burnt out. Lately she suspected he had been too much in it and far too little in bed, though he did not look ill; "only," she said with a sigh, "too spiritual."

Now she believed that she might possess herself of the secret for which she did not like to ask, and with the privileged freedom of an only child, she took up the little book, expecting to find some choice manual of devotion or some treatise upon art.

But it was that sheet-anchor of the Protestants, the New Testament. And it was given to her father by a man whom he had clearly no right to call his friend, because their friendship had not the sanction of the Church.

Like the good Catholic she was, Rosa dropped the book as if it had stung her. She had no time, however, to follow the painful train of reflection the discovery had occasioned; she heard her father's step, and quickly retreated to the end of the boudoir, lest he should suspect that she had become aware of his contraband possession.

"Ah, Rosa, you here!" said Monsieur Woeste, as *he entered*. "What do you want with me at this *time of the night?*"

"Here is a telegram, papa. Did you not hear the knocking?"

"I? No; when one is thinking, much that is startling or unusual may pass without one's consciousness."

But he was conscious that her hand shook as she handed him the telegram, and looking anxiously into her face he saw the tell-tale blood mount even to the temples.

"The telegram need not alarm you, *ma mie*. It was late to send one of so little importance. Possibly they did not remind themselves that it might be delivered in the middle of the night. Ah, Rosa, I see how it is! You have no business to be up so late. Young folks cannot do it with impunity. It affects their nerves. Now go at once to bed. I am not setting you a good example, but I command you not to profit by it.

"I cannot," she said; "not for the next two hours. You understand, papa."

Yes, he understood. He knew the one authority that could supersede all the claims of filial obedience, and he was too well acquainted with the various forms of penance not to guess how Rosa was engaged, ^{sin}
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she would not comply with his wish that she should retire.

"Allez à vos Heures donc, mon enfant, s'il vous faut" ("Go to your beads, then, my child, if you must"); "but you will not find much virtue in them, after all said and done."

Rosa stared at him in growing bewilderment; but she did not ask for an explanation, and if she had done the time was not yet ripe for it.

He kissed her with his usual pensive quietude of manner, and with a sudden playfulness pushed her out of the room and shut to the door; after which he returned to his little treasure-trove, she to her Heures and to tears, and to alternate hopes and fears respecting the father who till this night had been to her companion, guide, philosopher, and friend.

Had it not been for that remark about the Heures, Rosa would probably have reasoned herself into the belief that her father's perusal of the New Testament had no danger for him. She knew that it was necessary for clever men to read heretical books, so that they might be able to answer them. In the library of Louvain, she had seen the theology of all *the creeds represented*; and while it was quite natural

that the Bible should be a sealed book to a young girl like her, her papa might be permitted to read it at his pleasure. With such arguments Rosa reassured herself till she remembered his strange speech about the Heures. That indeed was a revelation of a change of opinion in a very important direction. It was difficult to connect with it such an alteration for the better in his manner. Surely it was from the false comfort that she had heard was an attendant on religious delusion—a sort of lying spirit. She trembled at the idea; and this was what had come of this dangerous friendship for Monsieur Van Hout.

Skilful hands they were that had played with the edged tools. For long they had received no wound; but now who could tell the extent of the mischief?

Rosa resolved that she would not visit the Van Houts any more. Her father's late reserve to her was now reflected in her own manner; but being one of the most loving of daughters, she was unutterably wretched. It was impossible to be the same with this dreadful doubt injected into her mind. If he could go astray, who was to be trusted?

Rosa's belief in the infallibility of the Pope of Rome had not been so practical as her belief in her father's.

Pondering these new doctrines in his heart, Monsieur Woeste was not alive to the alteration in her. He had been determined not to confide his views to her so long as he was in any doubt. To break away from long-established convictions was a hard wrench; but that revolution of his inner experience having taken place which we have described, he dared not lose any time in communicating the glad secret to her.





CHAPTER VI.

AN UNWELCOME GIFT.



GAIN they stood in what to both was holy ground, and the fire was burning brightly. Monsieur Woeste led his child, little knowing how reluctant she was, to the hassock where she had so often sat, with the lamplight floating over her glowing face or the firelight dancing on her smooth, dark hair.

"My dear," he said, "I have much to say to you."

Rosa could have buried her face in her hands, such a shivering sense of apprehension seized her; but she managed to preserve her outward calm.

"To day at the depôt in the Rue de Brabo, I bought you a book which, if I had known its value, I should have presented to you long ago. Take it, then, my

Rosa, and may it be a 'lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path,' until the day that you arrive at your heavenly home."

He put in her hands a richly-bound New Testament, with gilt edges and gold clasp. Rosa, though she could not refuse it, did not accept it cordially. Indeed, she all but put it from her.

"You forgot that I would not be allowed to read it," she said.

"And why should you not be allowed to read it?" asked her father. "Is it not God's will that you should use the intelligence He has given you? Has not every child a right to read his father's letter for himself? You are not required to be led along as another conscience, another will may direct; it is a grand mistake."

"Oh, papa!" she said gently, "those are the arguments the heretics use; they sound very strange from your lips."

"Yes, and there is more than new arguments there: there is a new song which cannot sound so strange to any one's ear as my own. I shall start when I first *hear my own voice* in it, in that other world. If you *would know where* I have learned it, I must tell you

in that Book. I have found where all the glory and the honour and the power lies. I know why I was always washing in my Abanas and Pharpars, and could not get clean.

"There is a fountain that can cleanse man's innermost. Read about it there, my darling, and then you will know why I, who was always sad and mortified, am full of peace and joy and love to all the world."

"Oh! papa, this all comes of your intimacy with Monsieur Van Hout!"

"What a wonderful thing to come of it," he said, with a lovely sparkle of mirth, glancing on the surface of the deeper happiness, like a foam-bell on a strong, on-rolling stream. "Then all the world ought to make the good Van Hout's acquaintance."

"But, come, you are not gracious, Rosa; you do not look to see what the hand that gave may have inscribed on the title-page."

"I beg your pardon, papa," she said, immediately turning to it; and then her own name and her father's met her eye, with the date of presentation, while below was written:

"He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him."

"There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

"JESUS ONLY!!!"

These last two words inscribed in the spirit of triumph in which the glad discovery was made.

Rosa was deeply moved, but she tried to control herself.

"Now, will you not read it?" said her father, persuasively; "and see what it is all about?"

"I will never part with it, papa, because it was your gift. Also I will ask permission to read it. I will not read it if it is refused. I have received ordinances, and I must abide by them. If you are disappointed, remember that I received them first from you."

The doggedness of the tone was not promising.

Monsieur Woeste was wounded by it: he did not know her real feelings. For long he reasoned with her, and for long she stubbornly resisted his entreaties. At last her doggedness gave way, though her resolution did not.

"Oh, papa!" she said, weeping, "You little know what you have done. You have broken my heart. *I always set you up so high. Now I shall never know another happy day in my life, unless you see*

your error and come back to the only true Church, the only religion that can be called a religion; so holy and beautiful that one wonders that any one like you could ever turn away from it."

The scene became so painful that it was a mercy for both when it ended.





CHAPTER VII.

NOT ALL IN VAIN.



HE altered attitude of the child to the parent was sufficiently apparent after this, but Monsieur Woeste bore all patiently. Rosa, he knew, was only to be pitied. She was suffering agonies on his account. She had every wish to appear dutiful and affectionate, but her prop was gone; her idol had stepped down from its high place among the holiest saints of the Romish Calendar, and she firmly believed that an eternity of punishment might overtake him, for his lapse into the deadliest of all sins—heresy—if he did not repent in time.

A few days after the above conversation her father *said to her, with an embarrassment which he had never before known in speaking to her:*

"I am going this afternoon to see my dear friend, Monsieur Van Hout. Will you not accompany me?"

"No, thank you, papa; it will be better for me to stay at home."

"As you will; but your young friends, his daughters, will be glad to see you."

"I do not call them my friends," she said. "I have always visited them under protest; you must know it, papa. Besides, when we have nothing in common in religious matters, what oneness of spirit can there be. It is wearisome enough to be always on the look-out, lest we say anything to offend one another."

"Nothing in common! You have a great deal in common; and you forget what a gulf such sentiments place between you and me."

"Yes; but that has opened very lately and very suddenly. Oh, don't talk about it, papa!"

"I am so sorry for you, my darling. You will see with other eyes some day."

"I suppose," he thought, "she sees me at the same side of the gulf as Dives. Well, it cannot be helped. There is more hope of her than there was of me a short time ago."

Who shall describe the feelings with which the good

pastor of Neufclin heard the news which his friend had sought him to communicate. It seemed too good to be true, but there was all the evidence in Monsieur Woeste's earnest eyes and his shy, questioning manner. And then to have all the good traced to words so simple and so few. And the New Testament—he had hoped much from its perusal when he had given it to Adolphe Woeste so many years ago, but the grain had been hidden in the ground so long that he had given up all expectation of seeing it come up.

“*Mais dites-moi,*” said Monsieur Woeste, “how was it that you never before told me that, though your religion had nothing of exterior, it was able to change the heart and renew a man's nature?”

“I did tell you so,” said Monsieur the Pastor. “It was what I was always aiming to tell you; but I suppose the words never laid hold of you in the same way before; it seems to be God's way to work out the greatest results by the simplest means, that His may be the glory. And how does Rosa take it? Can you carry her along with you?”

“Ah, poor child! She is completely desolated. Her sorrow for me would move a stone. I have *presented her with a New Testament*, but she refuses

to read it. Rosa is of a very strong nature. It will not be easy to give her ever so slight an inclination to a course opposite to that she has all her life pursued."

"True! Still with God all things are possible. We will pray for her, and we will be sure it will not be in vain, for the promise is not only to us but to our children."

"Now I have on my part a little confidence which I must give to you."

Monsieur the Pastor's little confidence was the subject which had exercised his mind before that memorable afternoon when the Woestes dropped in, and now it seemed as if a voice said to him: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

One seal, at least, was given; and, oh! such a precious one!

There was joy around the pastor's hearth that night. The thoughts of the two girls, Jeannette and Emilie, were very busy. The only qualification to such contentment was the apprehension lest Monsieur Woeste should be much persecuted. It was evident also that Rosa was in great trouble; but a sweet strain of hope and thankfulness mingled with the pastor's prayer as the day was growing to evening.



CHAPTER VIII.

ROSA WISHES TO ENTER A CONVENT.



HE next step in Monsieur Woeste's history was his formal abjuration of the Church of Rome and his reception into the fold of the Reformed. This step, as may be supposed, cost him dear. The ugliest phantoms that the most timid heart could conjure up took bodily shape. "But what can separate us from the love of Christ?" said the apostle. Monsieur Woeste found himself in all things "more than conqueror."

His deepest sorrow was the one that lay nearest home. Rosa's growing alienation was most painful to him; and yet she was as studious of his comfort, and as mindful of his wishes, where only secular things *were concerned, as ever she had been.* It was the ice

of reserve between them that troubled him. Yet he did her full justice. He acknowledged to himself the extreme likelihood there was that, if their mutual position in the matter had been reversed, he should have been angry as well as grieved, and perhaps shown her not a little harshness.

Besides, he knew that her spiritual director would do his best to reach him through her; would widen the breach between them at the point where it would be most trying to him.

It has ever been so in the history of religious dissensions when they have been in the household. Rosa loved her father intensely, but she was more loyal to what she conceived to be truth than she was even to him; and what she suffered in the struggle can scarcely be imagined, save by those who have passed through a similar experience. Her agony was very great. The fear she had of the future that remained for him beyond the grave tortured her the most. If to have made her life one long penance of the most severe, degrading, stultifying kind could have purchased his immunity, she would willingly have taken it upon her. Her prayers for him to Mary and her favourite saints were unceasing; and yet she behaved

to him with the reserve and coldness she had learned was proper under the circumstances.

Monsieur Woeste, however, was not repulsed into ceding his fatherly rights.

He insisted now and again on her listening to him while he reasoned with her as to the proofs he had of life-long error and of new-found truth.

She would not be convinced.

"You know that I cannot argue with you, papa," she said. "It is not likely; but I can keep true to my own faith, though I have not the weapons of defence that would avail me with you."

"And this faith, what has it done for you?"

"It has done all that has been done."

"Has it given you rest? Has it touched your heart at the core and cleansed your nature in its innermost recesses?"

"No; I should then be beyond the need of penances and of absolution. No human being is ever that. Nevertheless, where I am in fault I have myself to blame and not my Church."

One morning she came down to breakfast, her eyes red with weeping and haste written upon all her toilet. *Monsieur Woeste* would have sympathized with

these signs of distress, but he knew every word would be painful to her.

"Papa," she said, as her chocolate grew cold before her, "I wish you would let me go into a convent. I am sure it would be for the best, and I think I have a vocation."

"A vocation to leave me," he returned bitterly. "No, Rosa, you will think better of it, and I will not have any steps taken while I have the power to prevent it."

He knew enough of the avaricious character of the priests to be sure that they would not be too eager to secure Rosa as a *religieuse*, till they could have a claim upon her fortune. That, happily, was entirely at his disposal.

His apprehensions, then, of the threatened calamity were not great; but it cut him to the quick that she could wish to carry matters so far.

"And yet I am no great comfort to you," she said, in a low and most unhappy tone.

"That may be true, and yet——. Well, if you can bear to be without me, I can't bear to be without you"; and putting down "*La Flandre*," which he had taken up during her silence, he hurried away into

the studio. The girl's resolution failed her, and she followed him.

"Papa," she said, impulsively laying both hands on his arm; "It is all too hard. Everything is hard now; but don't think, oh! don't think, I could bear too well to leave you. I only thought we had ceased to have much in common; we were uncomfortable with each other, and you wouldn't mind."

"I understand," he said; "but no, my Rosa, though you do not do me justice, I cannot let you leave me. Let us both be quiet and wait; and for your own sake, dear, be careful not to make the distance between us greater than need be."

The caution was a wise one. From that day a little more sweetness tempered the bigotry which had set up the cold reserve; but Rosa was no happier. How could she be, believing as she did, that for her father to continue in his present faith and practice was to ensure his everlasting condemnation.

It did hurt her to see him so entirely at peace with himself, and strange it was that the calmness of delusion should so far exceed that brought by the priest's absolution and blessing.

Meantime Monsieur Woeste was making preparation

for a short professional tour into Switzerland. He did not take Rosa with him, as he feared that the errand he was on might expose her to many inconveniences which he would not have her share.

Rosa witnessed his departure with a heavy heart. In parting for even a short time we never know what may happen before meeting again; and if all is not kind and right between us and our best beloved, the separation is doubly painful. It becomes then an emblem of the mental and moral one.

While he was away, Rosa recited many prayers for him, and she did more than recite prayers, she prayed with all her loving, blindly trusting heart; and sometimes she longed for his return, hoping that it would bring some answer to her prayers.





CHAPTER IX.

THE NEWLY-FOUND TREASURE TESTED.

IT was on a hot evening in one of the leafiest of Junes that Monsieur Woeste reached home. Some few days before, heavy rains had been prevalent, and there had been gloomy predictions in consequence ; but now the sun had come out with sudden heat, and in the Bois de Plaisir, near Monsieur Woeste's house, the grass looked all the greener, the trees all the more beautiful for the late downpour. Monsieur Woeste arrived two hours earlier than his daughter expected. She ran to meet him, but received only a languid embrace.

"I'm glad to get home," he said ; "for I have not been feeling very well this last day or two. I thought *I had better push on.*"

A strong shiver passed down him as he spoke.

"But, papa, you are ill and feverish. Ninette, light a fire in papa's room, quick ; and come out here to the stove, papa, since there is no fire anywhere else. We will send for the doctor at once, but shall I give you a tisane ?"

Monsieur Woeste shook his head.

"No ; I will wait for the doctor."

Passively he accompanied her to the stove in the large house-place or kitchen. The light on Ninette's brightly-polished casseroles hurt his eyes. He closed them and hung his head listlessly. There was every sign that he was in for an illness, and Rosa, though she was young and inexperienced, knew it. Clouds were gathering on her horizon. She felt as desolate as a lonely watcher on the beach who sees

"The night-rack come rolling up,
Ragged and brown."

Oh, how she wished then that her mamma was alive or that she had a sister ! She was too ignorant and inexperienced, she feared, to nurse her papa properly, if his illness should be serious.

She had the good sense, however, not to ask too many questions. She stood by his side, first putting

her hand on his forehead, then in his feverish palm ; but she did not ask him what was the matter, or how he had taken cold. When his bed was warmed and his room ready, she advised his retiring ; and though it needed some effort, he showed no reluctance. Soon after a physician arrived.

The opinion he expressed, after an examination of the patient, was that, though no acute symptoms were yet present, it was a case of rheumatic fever. He was right, and the more painful characteristics of the malady developed rapidly.

Monsieur Wceste had had the misfortune to get thoroughly drenched among the mountains. Slowly and painfully he made his way back to the auberge whence he had started ; but, though on his arrival he took means to oppose the risk he had incurred, Nature was not to be cheated out of her bill of pains and penalties. Finding he must pay, he wisely concluded to make the best of his way home, and it was well he did so, for even the helplessness of an infant does not exceed that of a man bowed and bent together with strong pain.

Rosa had often heard of such agonies, but she had *never before been called upon to witness them.*

With beautiful consideration for her feelings, her papa often insisted on her leaving the room ; yet her imagination was so busy with his possible sufferings in her absence, that she did not gain much by the respite.

The Père Matthieu was very busy with her too. Only a short time ago he had denounced the apostate Woeste from the altar ; he had forbidden the congregation of the faithful to have anything to do with him. He had emphatically become to them as a "heathen man and a publican." But now, such was the long-suffering, the devotedness, the tenderness of Mother Church, the Père Matthieu was seized with a fit of fatherly solicitude, and his inquiries after his dear, but recalcitrant, son were endless.

Of course, such a dignitary was not to be put off by the bulletin confided to the *portière*. He must always see Mademoiselle Rosa, and in his interviews with her he assumed all the authority that belonged to his office.

The plain, motherly attendant that monsieur had asked for was deemed ineligible. It was plainly proved to Rosa that, if she were introduced, her father would suffer from her inexperience and want

The Archer's Chance Shot.

à savoir faire. Two demurely spoken and exceedingly saintly *sœurs* were installed as nurses, looking, as they took up their position by the sick man's bed, much like a couple of mutes on each side of a hearse.

The physician, who knew well where the balance of his interest lay, and was withal a professed, though not over devout, Catholic, pronounced the Père Matthieu's arrangements excellent; and between them all the wishes of the patient were as much regarded as the whims of a refractory child.

One beacon light, however, rose above Rosa's sea of trouble. Père Matthieu, and her ready credence to all that oracle might say, had set it there: "This affliction was cause for devout thankfulness. True, it was a judgment, but it was a judgment sent in mercy. During the seclusion and the stillness of the sick-room, conscience would appeal to the sufferer against his heresy; would tell him God was offended; ay, and every twinge of agony would but give emphasis to the assertion.

[And really, Père Matthieu, we think that rheumatic fever is as good a substitute for the rack as can well be found.]

His weakness and his danger he would find

his false hope fail him. He might not surrender without a struggle, but at last he would cry out for the torch to be relighted that he had quenched. He would stretch out suppliant hands to the Holy Mother and his old teachers, and, oh! what forgiveness and love should he find in them all!

“At the least it were better for him to die reclaimed than to live on in his delusion and be taken in the snare.”

And to all this, Rosa was ready to say, Amen!

Oh! she had not thought that the answer to her prayers for her papa was to come in this way, but desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and, hope being strong in the young, she thought there might be many good, happy days before him yet, with the past only remembered as a dreadful dream.

Meanwhile the Père Matthieu, like the wily Jesuit he was, did not at first insist on a personal interview with the patient. He sent him only his salutations and his best wishes for his speedy recovery; but on Rosa he urged it *de rigueur* that no Protestant was to be allowed to see him—“to interfere between him,” he said, “and the good influences that were doubtless at work. And for herself she was not, till she had his

permission, to discontinue her duties among the poor and the children of the schools."

"Could not another take them?" asked Rosa, nearly suffocated.

"No, *ma fille*; I have my reasons. They are of the best. And you!—you are *trop loyale et sensée* to question them."

At that moment Rosa almost envied the Van Hout demoiselles their independence.

Now, one of the Père Matthieu's reasons was so kind and good, that no one with any common sense would think of quarrelling with it.

He knew well that, under the circumstances, Rosa could lend little real aid to the patient. All she could do was to look on at the service of the stronger and more efficient. Her sensibilities were continually harrowed by having to witness pain which she could not relieve; so it was much better, much healthier for her to have her attention diverted to work that lay outside her home, and to be taken quite out of the way for a short time each day.

The other reason may well be challenged. He *knew* the solace that her presence must be to *Monsieur Woeste*, but he did not judge it expedient for

him to have too much of that solace. He wanted to put every imaginable barrier between the parent and the child, except where he felt quite sure of making the latter his ally. But it was through Rosa that the hardest blow was always to be struck.

Rosa's cup was full. The threat that she would leave her papa was always recurring to her with a kind of sting, though in making it she had acted on instructions, and now she was on the horns of a difficult dilemma. Might not her papa wonder that she could leave him so much. Not, surely, if he knew how the case stood. But, then again, would he not reflect on Père Matthieu, and think that in this was additional confirmation of the unkindness of the Church? Better for her to die of shame than cast a reproach there. There was another aggravation of the trial. In her visits to the school and to the homes of the poor, she frequently met her father confessor, and as often as she did so he had some new task to impose upon her, something which kept her longer from home. It was very irritating, but remonstrance she found was useless. Yet there was one errand over which time, health, energy, were all a freewill offering.

In the solemn twilight, when the line of light that blazed at noon lay deeply in shadow, Rosa was to be found in the Cathedral of Les Saints Apôtres, and there, before the shrine of "our lady," with lighted, earnest face she prayed, prayed long and fervently ; but it was all for one life and for one soul. Then she laid her offerings, chosen always from the best that she had to give, and retired, anxious, doubting, but still outwardly serene and calm.

It was once after she had been so engaged that she found her papa was enjoying a lull in his sufferings, and that he wanted to speak to her.

He looked at the Sœur Marie as if he could dispense with the pleasure of her company for awhile, and suggested that if she would go and lie down in the *salon*, or try the evening air in the garden, the change might do her good.

The sœur Marie withstood all such disinterested entreaties. She had received her instructions, and was well used to the sensation of being *de trop*.

"I am glad to find you so much relieved, dear papa," said Rosa, kissing him very cautiously. "Oh ! how you have suffered. It has seemed strange to me that *such violent pain* could last so long !"

He did not speak, but his eyes feasted on her face. It was a happy thing to feast upon, for to find him so much better was more than she had dared to hope. She was sure the Blessed Virgin had listened to her prayers, and that it was at her intercession this merciful respite was obtained.

"How long have you been so much at your ease, papa?"

"For the last hour."

"Do you not want to sleep?"

"No, I have no inclination. I am glad I have not. The pain is always worst when I wake up from sleep. I have learned to dread it."

"How hard that seems?"

"Yes, but it is usual. Where have you been all this time?"

"Where I always am at this time, papa. I go into the cathedral. There is no time when one can pray so well; but I make no prayers now for myself. I cannot; they are all for you."

"You good, little praying soul!" he said, smiling tenderly on her.

"So, papa, when you miss me at this time you will think nothing of it, will you?"

"Nothing you would not like. May God answer your prayers in his own way. I believe He will. And in the day you need much rest, for you sit up too long with me at night ; a great deal too long, and it is not necessary. I ought to be firm and forbid it."

"Oh ! don't, papa ! Don't make things harder for me than they are."

And then, with a deepening blush, and a conscious struggle betwixt conflicting principles :

"Indeed, I should never leave you but for my duties."

"You are right to respect their claim."

"No ; I cannot take any credit to myself for that. Père Matthieu has bound me to them, no doubt for want of someone else. And I think he must have his hands full, for he gives me so much more to do. *C'est ennuyeux !*"

"If it is Père Matthieu takes you out, I am more obliged to him than I thought."

"And, papa, he is so solicitous about you. He never lets one day pass without particular inquiries."

"Beautiful magnanimity ! He would give me over to eternal perdition, but not to rheumatic fever !"

"*Is there anything I can do for you, papa ?*"

"What I should most like would be to hear a chapter from the New Testament, or a sweet, rich German hymn.

"Ich habe nun den Grund gefunden
Der meinem Anker ewig halt,
Wo anders als in Jesu Wunden,
Da lag er vor der Zeit des Welt,
Der Grund der unbeweglich steht
Wan Erd und Himmel untergeht."

"Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain,
The wounds of Jesus for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain,
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away."

The Sœur Marie crossed herself.

"I think, *mon enfant*, you should retire. Your father is talking more than is good for him."

"Don't distress yourself, Rosa," said Monsieur Woeste, in consideration for her embarrassment.

"You shall sing me the *Agnus Dei*. Perhaps, Sœur Marie can join you. You see I am in a spoiled humour, and am not to be put off with nothing, even if I cannot have what I ask for."

The nun had a clear soprano voice. Rosa's was a rich contralto and both had a religious ring in
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them. Presently that divine melody and its more divine burden, borne on the cadence of the stately Latin tongue, filled the room, till it seemed as hallowed as a cathedral aisle.

It filled the ear of the sick man and won its way into the deepest recesses of his reverent soul. Like Nathaniel, he beheld the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," but this was the best of his rejoicing that he knew He had taken away his own.

The singing over he fell asleep, for he was very weak, and the little flush of animation and strength that had so delighted Rosa would not last a long time. From that brief snatch of conversation with him, her hope of her father's recovery was considerably heightened, but her heart sank lower and lower as regarded his apostasy. She had not the sign that Père Matthieu had led her to expect. On the contrary, the ground of her father's belief was in no degree shaken. Evidently it was from that he derived his chief consolation.

And here a very dark whisper was breathed into her mind:

"Supposing he should, after all, be right and I wrong?"

It was a suggestion from some tempting spirit, she was sure. Perhaps it was permitted to assault her because she had ceased to pray for herself ; as if, poor child, she could stand a day or an hour without invoking Mary's help. She resolved to repair this negligence, this sin of omission ; but the whisper would keep coming for all that.





CHAPTER X.

THE NEW PICTURE.



HE lull in the storm of pain proved to be transitory. There were many wearisome days and nights yet to be endured, and in the morning it was "would that it were evening! and in the evening, would that it were morning!"

Deep as was the bloom on Rosa's cheek, it began to fade, and her lustrous eyes looked heavy, her step grew slow and spiritless.

One morning she arranged fresh flowers in her father's room, wondering if in intervals of pain he ever noticed them; he said:

"Ah! those are sweet and they have not had time *to forget the dew!* It makes a sick man's soul blossom *only to look at them.*"

"Why, papa, you are a little like yourself this morning?"

"I have not been a fervent lover of Nature. It is the holy temple God is in, and is better than any made with hands. If I get better I shall love it more. Still I know the spots in the Bois where the ferns grow most luxuriant. I know, too, the little blue and pink-eyed wild flowers in the long grass by the stream, and in the lawny level park. I wish you would bring me some of them fresh every morning."

"Still another call out!" said Rosa, playfully. "What can be your motive, papa? There is no need to have them every day. In a little wet sand, or with the water changed frequently, they keep fresh a long time."

"It is the whim of a sick man. I want them as fresh and sweet as the choice herbage the young lamb loves to crop after its manner."

"It would be hard, papa, to deprive you of the gratification. You shall have them fresh every day."

"Yes, but you must gather and bring them to me. They will be welcome from no other hand."

"Oh! consider how much I am out already, and Père Matthieu . . ."

"It doesn't matter. When you can't gather them, let them remain where they are."

Rosa accepted the task. Her papa in imposing it was a better Jesuit than Père Matthieu, who, with all his wisdom, was blundering wofully; but she never dreamed of that. The patient grew weaker, and was often in danger of sinking beneath the strain on his endurance.

Then, judged Père Matthieu and some of his *confrères*, was their time. They insisted upon seeing him. When he refused, and Rosa urged the danger that might arise from disturbing him, with his very life depending upon quiet, they worked upon her spiritual fears; they reminded her of what they had come to save him from; they said that every obstacle she put in their way was an obstacle put in the way of his salvation!

Rosa was by no means of a yielding temper. She was strong of heart and will; but what can be more vacillating and weak than a mind that cannot decide to its own satisfaction what is right and what wrong. She oscillated like a pendulum. Her affection for her earthly father drew her one way; her obedience to the *ghostly* one the other. So, with both doctors and *nurses as allies*, the priests got it very much their own

way, and Monsieur Woeste was cajoled and entreated, flattered, censured, and threatened till the mind was more worried than even the poor, aching, outward frame.

The doctor at last thought there had been enough of it, and ventured some remonstrance; but the opposition was strong, and he dared not go so far as to match his professional authority with the priests.

One evening when Père Matthieu had retired—an angry glare in his eyes—Monsieur Woeste looked wearily at Rosa, and said:

“I wish my friend Van Hout were here.” Rosa wondered that he had never expressed that wish before. It was what she had been dreading all along.

“You are not to see your friends, papa; the excitement is not good for you.”

“And yet it is good for me to be worried by those pragmatistical priests, saving Sœur Marie’s presence; the Père Matthieu above all. You are admirably consistent, Rosa.”

She was silent, thinking it was best to let the subject drop.

“It must be in the papers that I am ill. ~~Has~~ Monsieur the Pastor, never inquired for me?”

"Yes," said Rosa, hesitatingly. She knew how solicitous he had been, and that he was trusting to her to write and tell him when he might see her father.

The young ladies also had written to her, but at Monsieur Van Hout's door she laid her father's lapse into heresy.

Père Matthieu had forbidden her in the strongest terms to admit the pastor further than the *salon* if he should happen to call, and Rosa, though a candid, ingenuous girl, was politic enough not to make much of Monsieur Van Hout's attentions, lest it should strengthen the desire for his nearer sympathy.

"All your friends are very kind, papa; but they know well that while you are so ill, you must be left to the care of your own family."

"Do they? I wish Père Matthieu knew it also."

"We cannot gainsay him, because he comes here at the call of religion."

"Oh! how I do wish I could see Van Hout! Mind, if he calls here you bring him up, Rosa. And if he writes you might say in answer that the sight of him *would do me good*. I believe my pains are leaving *me*. *They get milder*; but, oh! I am very weak!"

The next day Rosa took counsel with her confessor, and entreated him to authorize the longed-for visit. It might be made very brief.

The priest met her with a storm of anger, and told her that she was an unworthy daughter of the Church; that if she could not be more true to her principles, she had better enter a convent where she would have the benefit of the oversight of others.

Rosa did not accept the censure as submissively as was usual with her. Her nerves were affected by all the thwarting and friction, the conflict between love and duty, she had experienced; while unconsciously to herself her opinions were becoming, if not unsettled, modified. That terrible question, "If, after all, papa should be right and I wrong?" had not been silenced yet.

So she argued pertinaciously:

"But since the mischief is done, it cannot be undone by keeping Monsieur the Pastor away; and papa having learned all he has to teach, there will be no more for him to communicate."

"Do you oppose your judgment to your confessor's, *ma fille*? It is your place not to argue but obey!"

"Yes," said Rosa; "and I never before knew that so hard."

"You never before had so noble an opportunity of proving your fidelity to the Church. Take care that you profit by it."

The gradual deadening of the pain was a favourable symptom in Monsieur Woeste's case. After six weeks of fierce anguish the fever left him, and then his real weakness became apparent.

Periods of great faintness and sinking supervened, when every one around him felt that, though the crisis was past, the danger was not. His patience and thoughtful care of others had been conspicuous through it all. Now Rosa wondered at the sweet serenity that never for a moment failed him. And this serenity was not based upon thankfulness for his partial restoration. No; he tried to prepare his daughter's mind for what he believed was before her. He felt sure, he said, that he should not live long.

"Dear papa, it is your great weakness makes you think that. Certainly, after being almost kept upon lemons and grapes, and after enduring so much pain and sleeplessness, you cannot be otherwise than weak

When you are able to take all the nice things we have *now to make for you*, you will feel like a new man *and be grouping the details for your next picture.*"

"I should be at home with a paint-brush, my fingers feeling as if they were all out of joint. No, no, my Rosa, what to you is earth's canopy must soon be to me heaven's floor, and I am only sad at the thought of leaving you."

"Oh, papa, don't talk so!"

He frowned, from the restraint put upon him by the presence of that everlasting nun: when one went another came.

"You know the thing we talked about at breakfast that gave us both pain before I went away. I can't allow it; it would be a mistake. Life is meant for something better. The human wants a broad sweep and plenty of fresh air, to say nothing of that infinite variety with which God has supplied His creatures. I always had a dim perception of this."

"I will never leave you, papa," said Rosa, kissing him.

"Hush!" he whispered with a warning look, seeing that she was making his meaning obvious to the sister. "I meant in either case."

"If you should live to be eighty years old you will never forget the last six weeks, monsieur," interposed *the sœur*. "It has been a dark passage in your life."

"Oh! very, very dark!" said Rosa. "I have felt so conscious of that, it has actually pained me to see the sun shining as brightly as ever, until I remembered that the fine weather was in papa's favour though he was a prisoner in his room.

"Yet how bright the stars shine when it is dark," said Monsieur Woeste. "No; you are mistaken. It has been to me an afflictive, painful, trying time, but I have never for one moment felt it dark. How I wish that in my days of health I had had such a sweet light playing all around me as that which has visited my hours of gloom."

"*Il se trompe*," murmured the nun under her breath.

"What is the light, papa?" whispered Rosa.

"The light of the Father's countenance—God reconciled in Christ. Who can say what it is like? One must feel it to know."

Rosa looked up into his face and saw the ineffable token, and for one moment she was awed before him, as a man might be awed looking on an angel's face. Oh! it was hard to fancy him deceived! It was easier *to distrust all the world.*

She took care to ask the doctor if her father's

apprehensions concerning himself were not nervous ; if, indeed, he was not in a fair way to recovery, and his weakness just what might be expected under the circumstances.

"But I want you to tell me the truth," she said, frankly looking up to his face. He hesitated, and his hesitation convinced her that something was wrong.

"What is it?" she asked, with earnest, questioning eyes.

He told her then that the fever had left a sad *souvenir* in a dangerous form of heart-disease. It might prove suddenly fatal, or if great care were taken monsieur might to some extent outlive it, and be spared to a good old age. "But for that," said the physician, "he must for a long time be kept very quiet, and be able also to keep himself quiet."

What a thorn, then, it was to Rosa that she could not, might not, perhaps ought not, to screen him from the vexation of Père Matthieu's visits ; and these visits were becoming more and more exciting, the priest's anger rising in proportion to his disappointment that the patient had no need of his offices.

As if to prove to Rosa her own helplessness, that very day Père Matthieu, with a darkened brow and

an ominous suppression of tone and manner, asked to see him. Rosa entreated him to defer doing so till her father should be a little stronger, and repeated what the doctor had been saying to her.

It was in vain. The priest pushed past her to the room, and after a hasty knock at the door, entered it with scant ceremony.

He went through the usual formality of inquiring how the invalid had passed the night, and whether his appetite was returning, and then broached the vexed question of his perseverance in a heresy which had brought this judgment upon him, indicated the place to which he believed he would have been relegated had he died, and opined that he had been raised up only to be condemned to worse tortures if he did not make the most of his prolonged opportunity. Sœur Brighetta crossed herself, prayed to Mary, and invoked all the saints. Rosa, listening from the landing, shuddered.

Monsieur Woeste replied :

“You have now, as you think, done your duty, discharged your commission. I do not quarrel with you, *but your presence here is an intrusion ; I decline to see you, and, if you again force yourself upon a sick*

man, you must not expect much deference. While you anathematize me, I shall bless and pray for you; it is all I can do. And take this as my final answer. I have proved what you call orthodoxy; I have also proved that which you stigmatize as error. The one never satisfied, never sustained, never really helped me; the other has filled my soul with a love, joy, and peace that has never left me in the worst of my pain. My soul is as a narrow little creek, into which a great ocean is rolling, and that ocean is the love of God. 'It passeth knowledge,' Père Matthieu; but, oh! how I wish you would pray that its fulness might visit you!"

"He is hopelessly deluded," said the father between his closed teeth, as he strode from the room. "*Il ira au démon. Les tous deux sont en commerce.*"

Rosa hated the priest for that moment at least. She almost saw the sleeping partner to whom he had referred looking from his face; yet she did not for that reason doubt this man's divine commission or his power to retain and forgive sins.

It was a dreadful thing for her papa, in his critical condition, to have been exposed to this excitement. How could she help being very bitter with Père Matthieu for not sparing him? Yet, if he were in

error, and of course he must be, to leave him in that error, were more dreadful still.

"We must set about having you into a convent, out of the way of this irreclaimable heretic," said the père savagely.

"Oh, don't say that! I can't bear it," said Rosa weeping; and, for the first time since the artist's illness, she went into the studio.

The priest went to write a paragraph for the papers, announcing that the gifted Monsieur Woeste was suffering from mental aberration, and that he was clearly in no way responsible for the religious declension all faithful Catholics had mourned so much.

He thought this a brilliant stroke. In his own mind he believed that Woeste's end was very near; that he would never come alive out of the sick room and be able practically to disprove the assertion. He had composed in imagination many a sensational account of his restoration and of his own instrumentality therein; but, being disappointed of that, the surest way to neutralize the influence that his relapse *might* have on the minds of Rationalists or of any *who might be fickle* to their creed, was to attribute

it to the mental alienation but too common among men of genius.

This paragraph came under the eye of Monsieur Van Hout, and caused him some uneasiness, though he knew that it was probably only a pious fraud on the public credulity.

To return to Rosa, whom we have left in the studio, where from childhood she had spent so many happy hours. A sudden impulse had come over her to look again at her father's pictures. The associations attendant upon many of these were most thrilling and tender, and how often she had stood or sat for a place in them. She remembered her grief when he told her she had grown too tall for a little Saint John; but her joy when he decided that she might be a *filie de Jaire*; not as she lay in death, but as she looked when restored to her parents, the rich life-blood coursing through her veins.

And as Rosa disturbed some of his more recent studies, she chanced on one that was quite a surprise to her. The first impression was a bewildering one. The eye was annoyed with a glare of red flowers which was divided by a line of shining white ones.

And along this pathway of light walked a white-

robed maiden, whose robes were edged with the faintest pencilling.

Her meek face was turned upward, as if though barefooted she had no need to guard her steps; there were no thorns to fear, no reptiles to avoid. Yet each side of her, amongst the luxuriant blood-like growth of gladiolas, peonies, geraniums, red verbenas, and even poppies, glittering serpents trailed, and gorgeous birds with wings and crest that glowed like the flamingo's breast, paused upon the spray as if under the fascination of terror.

Yet what struck her as so strange was, that the face, though so familiar, was no face of saint or of traditionary human angel.

It was the sweet, pure face of Emilie Van Hout, the pastor's youngest daughter.

The artist had not been at pains to beautify it; he had not given it a fairer colouring, or favoured it with a more distinguished outline than Nature in her gentle mood had done. No; he had left it to its own peculiar charm of childlike simplicity, that a rare purity of mind had so well preserved, and religious *devoutness* heightened and spiritualized.

The allegorical meaning of the picture was obvious.

The pure mind would make a path for itself, of brightness, safety and unsullied innocence, amid all the garish, strong surroundings of world, pomp, and corrupting pleasures. It is neither tempted nor afraid. No eye for the fascinations, it is unconscious of the dangers that lurk beneath them. The serpent may wind hard by; it has not perceived it.

As Rosa continued to look, a new object dawned upon her. Very few would have noticed it at first. It was the shadowy outline of a cross at the beginning of this pathway of lilies.

The sight of that destroyed the first idea of inherent purity which she had supposed to be the artist's. It suggested the way by which alone perfect moral purity is to be attained. She was relieved by the sight of it. And yet we may explain that the cross was an afterthought. Rosa's reading of the picture was correct according to the first conception.

And this girl, so well worthy of the idealization, so humble, and in the least as well as greatest things so true, how hard it was to include her in the condemnation of her error!

Well might such people make heresy dangerous. If only her papa had never known them he would

never have fallen into the snare. Now who could tell but that Emilie's perfection of character had bewitched him, just as much as the pastor's unfortunate speech?

All that day and the next, Rosa's mind was possessed by a secret admiration of the Van Houts, with which the strongest feelings of resentment mingled.





CHAPTER XI.

NOT TO BE DENIED.



HE was again in the studio, putting away some pictures that had been returned from the Galleries, when a well-known voice was heard inquiring for her in the hall, and the studio door being opened, Monsieur Van Hout entered without ceremony.

"*Ah, bon jour, mon enfant!*" was his fatherly greeting. "*Comment va-t-il avec le malade et cette petite garde-malade, trop dévouée j'en suis bien sûr?*"

("Ah, good day, my child! How is the patient and this little nurse, but too devoted to him, I am sure?")

He went on to say that he had been impatient of her slowness to give him permission to see his friend.

Now that the fever had left him for so long, surely he might see him !

Rosa's face assumed the doggedness of which it was capable.

"Papa is up to-day," she said ; " but his case is as critical as when he was in the fever. The *sœurs* have not yet left him, though I have wished it. The doctor apprehends consequences if he has the least excitement. You will see, then, monsieur, that the fatigue of rising is enough for one day."

"*Ah, c'est possible d'attrister trop un si nerveux malade!*" (" Ah, it is possible to depress too much so nervous a patient.") " You know, mademoiselle, that in my vocation, I am used to sick people. I know how to deal with them. I will not stay too long. You can at least tell him I am here."

" I am sorry. I can tell him you have been, and assure him of your most kind solicitude, for which, indeed, we are both very grateful, Monsieur."

It was Monsieur the Pastor's turn to be persistent.

" I know he would wish to see me," he said.

"*Then it will be best to save him disappointment,*" returned Rosa. He looked at her gravely.

"And has he with the same consideration been spared the visitations of *ce personnage sévère*, the Père Matthieu?"

Rosa looked abashed.

"When religion demands it, one has not to think of the danger."

"*Allez, mon enfant*, tell your papa that *le pauvre pasteur de Neufelin* has called to see him. He will not be offended if he refuses him the pleasure; because he would not for the world disturb or fatigue him. Then I will retire if it is his wish. But, if you will not be so *complaisante*, I will write and tell him that I called to see him, and you wouldn't even let him know during my stay."

This terrible threat was delivered in the mildest of tones, but there was no reason to doubt that it would be put into execution.

Very sheepishly then Rosa went and delivered the message to her father, while Sœur Marie was sitting in the place she found it so hard to concede to her.

The nun at once remonstrated, and Rosa said, with tears quickly rising into her eyes:

"Not to-day, papa. He will not be hurt. Say it is yet too soon for you to see your friends."

"Not to-day! Oh! a man that has wrangled with his enemy may well be trusted with his friend! Send him up this minute. Not a day has passed that I haven't been hoping and praying for him to come."

With a heightened colour Rosa left the room. A look passed between her and the nun which was not needed to make the latter glide swiftly after her.

"It must not be," she said, in a low but distinct whisper. "Père Matthieu has forbidden it."

"How, then, can I help it? I must deliver the message."

"You must alter it: circumstances require; justify. Say Monsieur your papa, though feeling very unwell, does not like him to retire lest he should be disappointed, and have had much trouble for nothing. Then he is sure to go away." She presumed on a greater delicacy than her own priest had shown.

"I dare not; he will go away it is true, but he will write to papa."

Rosa was quite under the delusion that the end justifies the means.

"Who takes the letters?" asked the nun significantly. *But that extreme measure was fraught with terrible contingencies to Rosa. She broke away from*

her tempter, ran down stairs, and said: "Papa will certainly see you, Monsieur. He forgets the risk in the pleasure. If you would, like us, judge for him, you would not allow him to incur it."

"Now, Mademoiselle Rosa, an old pastor and *père de famille* is more experienced than you. I will not stay long; I will speak as softly as the best-trained nun of them all. I will tread as if I were in felt slippers and were adventuring red-hot ploughshares. Don't you be afraid, my dear. Your solicitude does more credit to the Catholic than to the child."

For Monsieur Van Hout had penetration, and he knew how to reprove good-naturedly.

Rosa led the way. The pastor followed her; but in the doorway of the sick room stood a tall, dignified figure, whose white scapulary propped up an invincible-looking chin.

"I am sorry to interpose," she said, not stirring an inch. "I have received the doctor's instructions."

"To admit the priest and not the pastor," said Monsieur Van Hout suavely; and in the politest and most easy-going manner imaginable, he took the lady by the hand and moved her aside, ere ever she was aware.

"*Permettez-moi, Madame; je ne veux pas vous déranger.*" ("Allow me, Madam; I do not wish to inconvenience you.")

"Bravo!" exclaimed the invalid, who, notwithstanding his reverend *garde-malade's* suppressed tones, had heard every word.

"Nay, do not go away, Rosa. Monsieur Van Hout is your friend and mine."

Rosa was secretly glad of the permission to remain. The *sœur* darted withering glances at her for having disobeyed orders, and Monsieur Van Hout, with a remarkable accession of courage, asked the latter if she would not be so kind as to retire. Surely she might feel safe in leaving him when Rosa was supported by Monsieur Van Hout."

"I abide by my instructions," said the nun, "and go out only when *Sœur Brighetta* comes in."

"*Quel vilain système!*" very naturally thought the free-hearted pastor.

"*Quelle dégradation!*" as naturally thought the late priest-ridden artist; but they did not let the nun's presence too much interfere with their subdued yet *pleasant interchange* of friendly feeling and of *thought*. The suffering past, the danger was briefly

alluded to, and then Monsieur Van Hout said, "And the religion of the New Testament, my friend. You have found that it sustained you, and it does sustain?"

"Yes; and those sweet Psalms of David! How they tell God all one wants for one. 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil' Once, how I feared, but the perfect love has cast it out."

"Ah!" said the pastor, looking lovingly at Rosa. "It is ever thus when one trusts to Jesus only. We put ourselves and our sins between our souls and Him, and we don't find Him. We put our merit, our good works, sufferings, teachers, and ministers between our souls and Him, and we don't find Him. But when one has done with all that, and trusts to Jesus only, oh! then He is near, and love and joy and peace are so near that soon they are within us, and we go on safely, afraid of nothing but what will grieve Him!"

It was hard to look into the pastor's face and be angry. It had expression other than that of the reverend gentleman whom Rosa had encountered when he visited that room for the last time.

Sœur Marie was, of course, in purgatory, but the time of endurance was short. Monsieur Van Hout was too experienced and had too much self-denial to allow the sick man to talk either too much or too long.

He left him under a promise that the visit should be speedily renewed.

"Well, have I done papa much harm?" he playfully inquired, as he took Rosa's hand in the hall.

"Oh! no, Monsieur!" she said, yielding irresistibly. "I am glad now that you have seen him—I am, indeed."

"And has it not been a beautiful thing to see papa while suffering so happy?"

"If I only understood it," moaned poor Rosa.

"Read for yourself the little book that brought the secret of that joy to him. Test it for yourself. You can but reject it if you find it is not true."

"You forget that it would not be right for me to read it, if I should read it against my conscience."

"Against your confessor's, you mean. You are not allowed to have a conscience of your own, my child. *If I lost my way and a guide volunteered to lead me, on condition that I let him bandage my eyes, I*

should distrust him in a moment. I should say, 'No, thank you; God has given me eyes as well as you, and I prefer to use them.' But, if another guide said: 'Here, Monsieur, I know the way, and I will take you, and you shall have the use of my lantern,' I should believe in that man. So you and I are of different minds, my dear Mademoiselle Rosa. But I forget; I am keeping my children's love all for myself, instead of giving it to you. *Que je suis égoïste.* Much love and many salutations to dear Rosa. Adieu."

And he passed down the street under the shadow of a dark, grim-looking convent, leaving behind him the sunny reflection of his own genial humour, and a slight pang of envy because of the pleasurableness of the religion he, in such a childlike manner, professed.





CHAPTER XII.

IT IS JESUS ONLY.

SOON after this, Monsieur Woeste was allowed to change the sick room for the favourite boudoir. This release freed him from the sisterly attentions of the nuns, as no further excuse could be found for keeping them about him; and now Rosa had the long-interrupted pleasure of having him all to herself. She saw his eyes soften as they rested on different cherished objects which he had never expected to see again.

Rosa sitting at his feet looked up with clear, honest eyes into his face, and asked a question which he little expected from her :

“ Papa, tell me truly, and forgive me for asking: had *you really* never any misgivings when you knew your *life was hanging on a thread?* ”

"Never any," said Monsieur Woeste. "No, the ground was firm under my feet. It was always with me as I said—

"Ich habe nun den Grund gefunden
Der meinem Anker ewig halt."

I hope I have not given you that New Testament in vain, Rosa. If I only could persuade you to read it, I would explain everything you wanted to know without pushing you to an acceptance of its teachings."

"Papa, I don't know but I shall," she said, very softly; and though the words thrilled him and filled him with hope, as even her question had done, he said nothing, but wisely left her to the workings of her own mind.

And from that hour Rosa was a daily student of her father's precious gift. He never asked her what she thought of it. The seed was sown; he did not dig down to it to see it grow. For many weeks she was disquieted and unhappy; but he waited for her confidence—he did not invite it.

Rosa had taken a bold step when she tore the bandage from her eyes and accepted the lantern. One thing that aided her to it was the deep disgrace

she was already in for permitting the heretic pastor to see his pervert.

She argued that reading the book could not alter her convictions as to what the only holy and true church really was. Having done it, she could confess her faults and receive the penance. Heavy as it might be, she could endure it. It would not add so very much to what was incurred already.

That was her position in the beginning; now for the result.

Monsieur Woeste was progressing on the road to health. The dangerous symptoms had sensibly abated when Rosa opened the subject on which he had been so long kept in suspense.

"Papa," she said, "I have read my New Testament; read it from beginning to end."

"Well, and what is the conclusion you have come to, my child?"

"That it is Jesus only, papa. I want to find Him for myself as you have done. Oh! will you not help me, for I can believe more easily for all the world than I can for Rosa Woeste? The discovery of the truth *has not made me as happy as it made you.*"

But that happiness came in a moment when she

was not looking for it. She did feel in her soul the "powers of the world to come," and now father and daughter could rejoice together.

They had much coldness and persecution to endure from those who had been their friends. Much social pressure was brought to bear upon them. They were lectured by priests and people; but the good part they had chosen could not be taken away from them.

And still the pastor and artist love to meet, and have long communion with each other; while the one friend that is to Rosa Woeste as a sister is the pastor's youngest daughter, the sweet, modest Emilie Van Hout.

THE END.



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